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John Allen Chalk

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To: Jane & Pat Wallace

John Allen Chalk

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November 2, 1970

Mr. and Mrs. Pat Wallace
183 Mattson
Cookeville, Tennessee 38501

Dear Jane and Pat:

I have learned through Jack Sells and John Acuff that Pat has been going through some unusual experiences with the Broad Street elders lately. I can appreciate in a small way what that means and have had both of you in my prayers constantly. I am praying that God has given and will continue to give you the wisdom and the peace that comes from being sure about your own relationship with Jesus Christ, and about your responses to Him in the many opportunities you are given to serve.H

Unfortunately, many elderships have long since forgotten what the true function of pastoring and shepherding the flock is all about (I Peter 5:1-4). This means that they become a "board of directors" and fall under the influence of a decision-maker syndrome that keeps them from either studying God's Word themselves or being very patient with those who are studying His Word carefully. The thing that keeps many timid church members from following their own convictions and above all coming through to an exciting personally real Christian life is the pressure from custom and tradition. Unfortunately, many people in the church today have not seriously studied their Bibles in years, and therefore, have come to believe and accept, on a second hand basis, many things that are not necessarily real or genuine. This means also that the real freshness of the Christian life and the power of the Spirit-filled life is not experienced. This is probably the greatest loss the church is suffering today—the loss of dynamic, vital followers of Jesus Christ.

I, therefore, want to encourage both of you to stay open to the Lord, to study His Word, to listen to those who want to advise you, but above all, to be honest with your own convictions as to what you believe God's Word teaches. This is the principle on which the entire restoration movement was founded: The individual interpretation of God's Word by every believer. If we sacrifice this for group judgment and for a consensus that is not centered in Biblical truth, then we have sacrificed everything. I will be praying that God continues to pour His love and grace on you in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Your brother,

John Allen Chalk

JAC:lc